

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13
DHA-02 ORM-02 /073 W
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R 241345Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3142
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 0822

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, LE, US
SUBJECT: LEBANESE COMMUNICATIONS TO SECRETARY VANCE DURING HIS
VISIT

1. SUMMARY. IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO THE ARRIVAL OF SECRETARY VANCE IN BEIRUT ON FEB 18, THE EMBASSY RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING MESSAGES FOR THE SECRETARY: A) A LETTER FROM GHASSAN TUENI, PRESIDENT SARKIS' SPECIAL EMISSARY TO WASHINGTON; B) A LETTER FROM FORMER PRIME MINISTER SAEB SALAM; C) A MEMORANDUM FROM THE "PROGRESSIVE LEBANESE CAUCUS"; AND D) AN EXTENSIVE MEMORANDUM FROM THE LEADERS OF THE MARONITE CHRISTIAN KFUR FRONT. THE LETTER FROM TUENI IS ESSENTIALLY A PERSONAL MESSAGE. THE REMAINING THREE DOCUMENTS ARE PREDICTABLY POLITICAL PLEAS. END SUMMARY.

2. GHASSAN TUENI. IN A HANDWRITTEN LETTER TO THE SECRETARY, DRAFTED WHEN HE VISITED THE AMBASSADOR ON
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FEB 15, GHASSAN TUENI SIMPLY RECALLS THAT HE MET WITH THE SECRETARY IN NEW YORK IN DECEMBER AND SAYS THAT HE EXPECTS AGAIN TO VISIT WASHINGTON IN MARCH AND HOPES TO SEE THE SECRETARY AGAIN AT THAT TIME.

3. SAEB SALAM. IN A THREE-PAGE LETTER DATED FEB 17, SAEB SALAM LISTS EIGHT POINTS WHICH HE BELIEVES ARE

ESSENTIAL TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE SITUATION TODAY IN LEBANON. HE SAYS THAT "LEFTISM IS GIVING WAY TO REALISM" IN THE ARAB WORLD, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIANS. IF THE U.S. DOES NOT SEIZE THE PRESENT MOMENT, SALAM SAYS, THE ARAB WORLD, PARTICULARLY A DIVIDED LEBANON AND AN IMPOVERISHED EGYPT, MIGHT AGAIN TURN TOWARD THE LEFT.

4. PROGRESSIVE LEBANESE CAUCUS. THE PRESIDENT OF THE LEBANESE PRESS SYNDICATE, RIAD TAHA, SENT A "MEMORANDUM" DATED FEB 16. IT ARGUES THAT LEBANON HAS ALWAYS PLAYED A TRULY ARAB ROLE AND SUPPORTED THE PALESTINIANS. IN 1973, IN THE FACE OF ISRAELI RAIDS AGAINST PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON, LEBANON SHOULD HAVE EITHER BECOME A FULL-FLEDGED CONFRONTATION STATE OR RETURNED TO AUTHENTIC NEUTRALITY, INCLUDING A CESSATION OF PALESTINIAN COMMANDO ACTIVITY. THE PAPER CLAIMS THAT LEBANON'S "BRETHREN AND FRIENDS" BEAR PARTIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WAR, AND THEREFORE BEAR A RESPONSIBILITY TO HELP RECONSTRUCTION. THE MEMORANDUM OPPOSES PARTITION. IT CRITICIZES BOTH THE LEFT FOR ALLYING WITH THE PALESTINIANS AND THE RIGHT FOR REACTING THERETO WITH "ACUTE CHAUVINISM." A REASONABLE SOLUTION NOW REQUIRES "A SOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM INVOLVING THE REPATRIATION OF THE REFUGEES."

5. KFUR FRONT MEMORANDUM. THE BEIRUT PRESS REPORTED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS DURING THE WEEK PRIOR TO THE SECRETARY'S VISIT THAT THE KFUR FRONT LEADERS --
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FORMER PRESIDENTS SULEIMAN FRANGIE AND CAMILLE CHAMOUN, PHALANGIST LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL, AND FATHER CHARBEL KASSIS -- WOULD BE PRESENTING TO BOTH FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER GUIRINGAUD AND SECRETARY VANCE "NOTES" EXPLAINING THE GENERAL ANALYSIS OF THE "LEBANESE FRONT" OF THE PRESENT SITUATION IN LEBANON. KFUR FRONT REPRESENTATIVES CHARLES MALEK, BECHIR GEMAYEL, AND DANY CHAMOUN ATTEMPTED THROUGH THE EMBASSY TO SCHEDULE A MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY, BUT WERE TOLD THAT THE SCHEDULE OF THE VISIT ALLOWED NO TIME FOR SUCH A MEETING. THE FRONT THEREUPON DELIVERED THE MEMORANDUM TO THE EMBASSY ON THE MORNING OF FEB 18. THE FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER LIKewise DID NOT RECEIVE ANY KFUR REPRESENTATIVES, AND THE SAME MESSAGE WAS DELIVERED TO HIM.

6. THE MEMORANDUM, PROBABLY WRITTEN BY CHARLES MALIK, IS AN 18-PAGE REHASH OF THE KFUR FRONT'S INTERPRETATION OF LEBANON AND LEBANESE HISTORY, AND THE VALIANT ROLE

OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN ITS DEFENSE. CAMILLE CHAMOUN HAS DESCRIBED THE "NOTE" AS DERIVED FROM THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE FRONT AT ITS CONCLAVE THREE WEEKS AGO (SEE BEIRUT 0400), HOWEVER, IT IS NOT NEARLY SO STRIDENT IN ITS CRITICISM OF LEBANON'S MUSLIMS AND AVOIDS ANY HINT OF CHRISTIAN PARTITIONIST TENDENCIES. SALIENT POINTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

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R 241345Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3143
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 0822

A. "LEBANON IS THE HOME OF THE LEBANESE RESIDING IN IT AS WELL AS THE HOME OF THE LEBANESE OVERSEAS AND THE PEOPLE OVERSEAS WHO TRACE THEIR ORIGINS TO IT."

B. "... WE ARE HERE DEALING, NO WITH A CIVIL CONFLICT, BUT WITH AN ACTUAL WAR, AND INDEED A WAR BETWEEN THE LEBANESE ON ONE HAND AND THE PALESTINIAN AGGRESSORS AND THOSE BEHIND THEM ON THE OTHER."

C. "...LEBANON SUCCEEDED IN REPULSING INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM...."

D. "...LEBANON IS BURDENED TODAY WITH A HOARD OF ALIENS ON ITS SOIL WHO HAVE SPARED NO EXCESS IN THEIR ASSAULT UPON IT, THEY LOOTED MONASTERIES AND CHURCHES..."

7. THE MEMORANDUM SPEAKS OF THREE "CONSPIRACIES:"

A) "TO RUPTURE LEBANON'S AGE-OLD UNBROKEN HERITAGE;"
B) TO CUT OFF LEBANESE IN LEBANON FROM LEBANESE
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OVERSEAS; AND C) "...TO SUNDER THE LEBANESE FROM THEIR ROOTS IN THE MASSIVE AUTHENTIC WESTERN TRADITION." WHAT IS PROBABLY THE KEY PARAGRAPH OF THE MEMORANDUM EVOKES THE CURRENTLY POPULAR LEBANESE FRONT CONCEPT OF "PLURALISM...IN SUCH A WAY THAT EVERY CIVILIZATIONAL (SIC) UNIT WILL ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL ITS AFFAIRS, ESPECIALLY THOSE RELATING TO FREEDOM, AND TO MATTERS CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND FINANCIAL AS WELL AS QUESTIONS OF INTERNAL SECURITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ITS CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL RELATIONS WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD ACCORDING TO ITS OWN CHOICE." THE FOREIGN MINISTER COMMENTS THAT THIS WOULD NOT LEAVE MUCH FOR THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT.

8. THE MEMORANDUM APPLAUDS "THE SYRIAN INITIATIVE," WHICH IT FINDS CONTRIBUTES TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF LEBANON AND IS IN "THE PATH OF TRUE BROTHERHOOD." IT IS, HOWEVER, NUANCED IN ITS PERSPECTIVE ON THE ROLE OF ARAB STATES GENERALLY IN LEBANON: IT RECALLS "THAT THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES REMAINED FOR 16 MONTHS AN ONLOOKER ON THE LEBANESE DISASTER WITHOUT MANIFESTING ANY ACT OF CONCERN. DESPITE THIS, THE LEBANESE FRONT COULD NOT BUT WELCOME FOR FORCE OF DETERRENCE...IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT THE ARAB FORCE OF DETERRENCE, WITH ITS MISSION DEFINED AS IT HAS BEEN, COULD TURN OUT TO BE ONLY THE 58TH ATTEMPT AT PUTTING AN END TO THE FIGHTING WHICH HAS BEEN RAVAGING LEBANON FOR TWO YEARS...WHILE THEREFORE THANKING THE ARAB KINGS AND PRESIDENTS FOR THEIR GENEROUS INITIATIVE, THE LEBANESE FRONT...DEEMS IT NECESSARY TO EXPRESS ITS RESERVATIONS TOWARDS THOSE WHO ARE ACTUALLY IN CHARGE OF IMPLEMENTING, IN THE FIELD, THE MISSION OF THE DETERRENT FORCE." ON THE PALESTINIANS, THE MEMORANDUM IS UNCOMPROMISINGLY HOSTILE: "HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE PALESTINIANS, AND THEIR HOLLOW AMBITIONS IN LEBANON, AND THEIR CONCEIT,
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AND THIS WAR WHICH THIS CONCEIT PROMPTED THEM TO UNLEASH ON LEBANON, AND THE FACT THAT THEY ALLOWED THEMSELVES TO BE SWEEPED BY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM AND ALLIED THEMSELVES WITH IT, HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR ALL OF

THESE FACTS THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO NEED FOR ANY
INTERVENTION, ARAB OR NON-ARAB."

9. THE MEMORANDUM MAKES SPECIFIC DEMANDS ONLY WITH REGARD TO THE PALESTINIANS: A) THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM THE HANDS OF PALESTINIANS THEMSELVES AND ENTRUSTED TO A "JOINT ARAB COMMAND"; B) ALL THE PALESTINIANS PRESENTLY IN LEBANON SHOULD BE DISTRIBUTED AMONG THE MEMBER STATES OF THE ARAB LEAGUE ACCORDING TO THEIR RESPECTIVE ABSORPTIVE CAPACITIES; AND C) THERE SHOULD BE UNIFORM LAWS REGULATING THE STATUS OF PALESTINIANS IN ALL THE ARAB COUNTRIES IN WHICH THEY RESIDE.

10. THE ORIGINALS OF THESE FOUR DOCUMENTS WERE SYMBOLICALLY PRESENTED TO THE SECRETARY BY THE AMBASSADOR ON FEB 18, AND THEN PASSED ON TO ACCOMPANYING NSC MEMBER WILLIAM QUANDT.

11. THE EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT WE MAKE NO RESPONSE TO THE VARIOUS MEMORANDA OR THE TUENI LETTER. WE HOPE THE SECRETARY WILL BE ABLE TO RECEIVE TUENI IN MARCH, BUT HAVE MADE NO COMMITMENTS TO HIM. I EXPECT TO GET A FULLER EXPLANATION OF THE PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT (WHICH IS ON BEHALF OF THE ARAB LEAGUE, ACCORDING TO THE PRESS) AND WILL INFORM THE DEPARTMENT.
PARKER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS, POLITICAL LEADERS, POLITICAL SITUATION
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BEIRUT00822
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770065-0335
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
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Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3245900
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LEBANESE COMMUNICATIONS TO SECRETARY VANCE DURING HIS VISIT
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PSDC, LE, US, (VANCE, CYRUS R)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0377c1bf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009